

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
DISTRICT OF VERMONT

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Clerk of Court
Thomas J. Hart

**CLERK'S
ANNOUNCEMENT
03-103**

TO: Court Users
FROM: Thomas J. Hart
DATE: September 19, 2003
RE: Performance Appraisal Liaison for the Court

In an effort to ensure that the court is responsive to its users, Judge Colleen Brown is initiating a Performance Appraisal process and is inviting comment from all Court users, including attorneys who practice here, professionals involved in bankruptcy cases, and the general public. Experience has shown that comment is more freely given when made to an intermediary party rather than to the Clerk or Judge. The current wisdom indicates that the process is more comfortable, and ultimately more effective, if the feedback is given to a well respected intermediary who has the trust of the participants. In the case of evaluating the performance of a particular judge, it seems that the best way to both provide meaningful, constructive input for the judge, and solicit thoughtful, honest comments from participants is to have an attorney who never practices in the Court serve as that intermediary.

In light of these considerations, Judge Brown has asked Attorney John L. Kellner to be the intermediary for the Bankruptcy Court. We are pleased to report that Attorney Kellner has accepted Judge Brown's invitation to serve as the intermediary (a/k/a "performance appraisal liaison") for the Court. For those who are not familiar with him, John is an attorney with O'Neill Kellner & Green, P.C., of Burlington, who has previously served on judicial screening and evaluation committees and attorney grievance boards. He understands well the need to hold in confidence the names of the parties he speaks with, filtering the information as necessary so that he can relate it to Judge Brown in a manner that does not imply by circumstance the parties' identities.

The goal of this process is to solicit and convey information that will help Judge Brown, the Court and the Clerk's Office better serve the public. We are seeking your opinions and observations about the entire Bankruptcy Court experience, including, but not limited to, judicial demeanor, courtroom ambiance, treatment of attorneys, professionals and parties, efficiency of motion calendars and trials, professionalism of Court staff,

responsiveness of the Clerk's Office and Chambers staff to inquiries and requests for assistance, and the overall tone of the Court. We would like to know what you think we do well and what we need to improve.

Your candid participation and offering of constructive comments are essential to the success of this process. John needs and invites contact from practitioners, professionals involved in the bankruptcy process and the general public, by phone, in person or by e-mail. He will meet with Judge Brown on a regular basis to convey suggestions and observations based upon the input given to him. Also, from time to time, John would like to take it upon himself to initiate conversation with practitioners. Should you be contacted, please feel free to chat with him or not. Information that John transmits to Judge Brown will not be made public in any way. John's address, telephone number and e-mail address are:

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On behalf of Judge Brown, myself, and the entire Clerk's Office staff, I would like to thank you for any future input and feedback that you provide. This will help us as we strive to provide quality services to all court users.